

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region**

**Executive Officer's Report
Dennis A. Dickerson, Executive Officer**

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*** The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption

*** For a list of simple ways to reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see the tips at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/echallenge.html>

Charnock Sub-Basin MTBE Investigation

Many of the activities in the Charnock Sub-Basin Investigation Area are focused on the review of Hydrogeologic Assessment Workplans. Workplans needed substantial changes and Revised Workplans have been required to be submitted on an expedited schedule. Under the current schedule we anticipate that all workplans can be approved (including revised workplans) by mid-December 1997, with site assessment work completed by the end of the first quarter 1998. Other activities include the evaluation of the Shell and Chevron Pipeline final reports, coordination of groundwater sampling and gaging at existing groundwater monitoring wells, the development of an electronic data base (Microsoft Access 2.0) for all investigation and groundwater monitoring reports, and preparation for an aquifer pump testing.

Arcadia Wellfield MTBE Investigation

Work by Mobil Oil Corporation (Mobil) to complete activities required under the Interim Mitigation Measures Workplan are continuing. The onsite groundwater recovery and treatment system became operational on October 6, 1997, and is discharging treated groundwater to the sanitary sewer. A progress report on the effectiveness of the groundwater recovery and treatment system is due by November 17, 1997. Excavation and offsite disposal of contaminated soil and backfilling within Areas 1, 2, and 3 at the Mobil site has been completed. Three underground storage tanks were removed from the site on October 10, 1997. Excavation of Area 4 (the remaining onsite excavation area), at the Mobil site is proceeding and is anticipated to be completed by mid-November 1997. The Final Report for work completed under the Interim Mitigation Measures Workplan is due by December 5, 1997. Work to complete the activities required under the Phase 2A Investigation Workplan is continuing. The soil boring and groundwater monitoring well installation program is anticipated to be completed in late October 1997. The Surface Geophysical Survey Final Report was submitted on October 17, 1997 and the Final Report containing the correlated Surface and Borehole Geophysical Survey is due by November 7, 1997. The Short Term Pump Test (24-hour) Final Report was provided for agency review on October 10, 1997. On October 7, 1997, and October 17, 1997, Mobil submitted requests to eliminate the Long Term Pump Test from work activities required under the Potential Pathway Investigation of the Phase 2A Investigation Workplan. The Short Term Pump Test Final Report and Mobil's request eliminate the Long Term Pump Test is currently under review. According to the current schedule, a Phase 2A Investigation Final Report is due by November 17, 1997. According to the Consent Agreement

between the Regional Board and Mobil, a Remedial Action Plan is due to within 60-days after the Executive Officer accepts the Phase 2A Investigation Workplan Final Report.

Chloride and Salinity Issues

Staff are continuing outreach efforts to encourage water suppliers to work together with POTWs to track salinity loading that occurs in our Region. Most recently, staff led a meeting on September 29th at which representatives of water suppliers and POTWs in the Calleguas Creek and Santa Clara River watersheds discussed ways to coordinate monitoring efforts.

Also, at the October 23, 1997 Board meeting, State Board approved Regional Board Resolution No. 97-02: Amendment to the California Regional Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan), to incorporate a Policy for Addressing Levels of Chloride in Discharges of Wastewaters (Chloride Policy).

Drinking Water (MUN) Policy

Staff will be conducting a second set of informal planning sessions on Wednesday, October 29th (in Ventura) and Thursday, October 30th (in Monterey Park). During these sessions, concerned parties will attempt to reach consensus on designations of drinking water that currently apply to several waterbodies, including the Los Angeles River and Malibu Creek. Using comments and ideas from concerned parties, staff will brief the Board on a draft Drinking Water Policy prior to initiating formal public review for an amendment to the Basin Plan.

Agua Dulce

Following discussion at the last Board meeting, the Executive Officer sent a letter to the Agua Dulce Town Council. This letter expresses the Board's concerns over nitrate contamination in Agua Dulce and the possibility of significant growth without appropriate infrastructure. The letter also approves the Town Council's Wellhead Protection Plan, contingent upon successful implementation of wellhead protection measures and the existing growth pattern.

City of Los Angeles Amended Consent Decree

In 1991, the Federal and State Department of Justices, on behalf of the USEPA and the Los Angeles Regional Board, respectively, jointly filed a second Amended and Supplemental Complaint with the federal district court alleging the City of Los Angeles had failed to comply with certain provisions of its NPDES permit, particularly in the implementation of its pretreatment program. Without any admission of liability, the parties agreed to settle. The proposed settlement agreement (an addendum to the existing Amended Consent Decree) has been drafted but has not yet been signed by the parties.

In the proposed settlement agreement and a side agreement with the Los Angeles Regional Board, the City is supposed to contribute to the funding of several projects in the total amount of \$164,850 [SMBRP Epidemiological Study - \$100,000; Los Angeles County Storm Water Manual - \$20,000; SCCWRP's Storm Water Study - \$16,850; and, LA Regional Board's Bacteriological Monitoring Database - \$28,000]. Although the proposed settlement agreement has yet to be signed and entered into court records, the City already fulfilled its obligations on this aspect of the settlement agreement with the remittance of the \$28,000 for the Regional Database last October 2, 1997.

Los Angeles County Storm Water Work Group

At the July 21, 1997, Board meeting, staff advised the Board that, to have a wider perspective on the model programs submitted by the LA County Department of Public Works (the Principal Permittee to the Municipal Storm Water Permit) and facilitate the approval process of such programs, staff will organize a Storm Water Work Group. The group was convened and had its first

meeting on September 18, 1997. At that meeting, the group discussed with the Principal Permittee representatives the model program for Development Planning and Construction. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for November 4, 1997.

San Gabriel/San Fernando Cleanup Units

Joint "No Further Action" Letters

By October 31, 1997, U. S. EPA and RWQCB will send joint "No Further Action" letters to 500 businesses in San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys, notifying that the agencies are clearing them from the responsibility of regional groundwater cleanup efforts. These companies in question have used little or no solvents, and had no evidence of contributing to groundwater contamination based on Regional Board's investigation. U. S. EPA and the Regional Board are continuing to evaluate the responsibilities of other businesses that have been investigated and will send out additional "No Further Action" letters early next year if warranted.

Public Outreach

Board staff provided technical support to Main San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority in developing a comprehensive workplan to assist a group of small businesses in conducting soil and groundwater assessment work in South El Monte.

Calleguas Creek Watershed

The Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan Habitat/Recreation/Open Space Subcommittee is closely involved with a grant the California Coastal Conservancy has been awarded for preparation of a Calleguas Creek Watershed Wetland Restoration Plan.

The Water Quality/Water Resources Subcommittee is in the process of drafting a Water Resources/Water Quality Chapter in the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan. As a first step, subcommittee members have developed a list of their goals and objectives for water quality and water resources. Additional comments are being solicited from the business and agricultural communities. The subcommittee last met on September 26. A facilitated workshop is currently scheduled for November 21 which will serve as the subcommittee's next meeting. The purpose of the workshop will be to identify possible solutions to problems, pinpoint concrete actions which will be taken to address the problems, filter out long-term from short-term goals, and reach agreement on what issues to deal with first.

The Management Plan Steering Committee met on September 18 and is working on creating a timeline for watershed management plan development as well as developing ways to focus management plan preparation.

The next meeting of the full Management committee is scheduled for November 5 at 9:30 AM at the Ventura County Government Center. Information about the management committee and its subcommittees can be found at "www.calleguas.com".

Staff is waiting for another draft of the Calleguas Creek Characterization Study workplan from the watershed's dischargers. It has been delayed until the end of October.

Los Angeles River Watershed

The Los Angeles/San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council met on September 17. Meetings are generally held at the Los Angeles County Public Works facility in Alhambra at 900 S. Fremont Avenue on the third Wednesday of each month. The Watershed Council has a number of committees including Finance and Representation, Three-Year Watershed Study (interaction with LA River Task Force), Stakeholder Programs, Public Education and Outreach, Projects, and

Research. The Finance and Representation Committee has made a plea for financial support for the Watershed Council. The Los Angeles River may be considered for American Heritage River designation. An additional committee, the Scientific Advisory Committee, has been formed. The Council has sent out a survey form to its members asking for information on current and planned projects in the watershed. The objective of the survey is to gather all of this information in one document to facilitate partnerships and identify opportunities to promote and facilitate projects.

Santa Monica Bay Watershed

The next Malibu Lagoon Task Force and Advisory Council meetings will be held on October 21. The Lagoon Task Force has been meeting to find a resolution to lagoon water level problems. The Advisory Council has been in existence for a number of years and serves as a forum for discussion of local watershed issues.

The Malibu Creek Watershed Volunteer Monitoring Subcommittee and Rindge Dam Task Force both met on September 11. The Regional Board is actively involved with local volunteer monitoring efforts. This subcommittee meets the second Thursday of every other month and its next meeting is November 13. The Rindge Dam Task Force is involved with exploring possible dam removal options. It also will next meet on November 13. Other Santa Monica Bay Watershed activities are covered under the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project item.

Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant Open House

After more than two years construction, the upgrading of the Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is operated by the Ojai Valley Sanitary District, has been completed. Dedication ceremonies and an open house were held at the facility, 6363 Ventura Avenue in Ventura, on October 24, 1997, at 9:00 a.m. Since the treatment plant is the only significant point source in the Ventura River Watershed, its upgrading is of great importance to the water quality of the Ventura River.

The Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant was originally a secondary municipal wastewater treatment plant with a treatment capacity of 3.0 million gallons per day (MGD). The major concern was that the plant could not meet the nutrients and suspended solids (TSS) discharge limitations in their NPDES permit. Additionally, high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) in the effluent resulted in dissolved oxygen concentrations in Ventura River that could not support cold water aquatic habitat. The plant was required to upgrade under Cease and Desist Order No. 90-063, adopted on May 21, 1990. The upgrading of the plant added an oxidation ditch system consisting of anaerobic, anoxic, and aerobic zones for nutrient/BOD removal, and a tertiary filtration system. The upgrading started in January of 1995 and lasted for about 30 months. The project was a special one in that it replaced essentially all the treatment equipment at the same site without interrupting the treatment process. No major incident occurred during the construction except for a chlorine spill during the start up phase of the new treatment process.

The upgraded plant has the same 3.0 MGD capacity, with much better effluent quality. Most recent monitoring data shown that the quality of its discharge has been significantly improved. Compared with the average concentrations of pollutants before the upgrade, BOD has been reduced from 10 mg/L to 2 mg/L, TSS from 12 mg/L to 2 mg/L, turbidity from 8 NTU to 0.7 NTU, nitrate-nitrogen from 20 mg/L to 4 mg/L and ammonia-nitrogen has been reduced to less than 0.05 mg/L from 2.2 mg/L.

Nyeland Acres Treatment Plant Monitoring and Reporting Program

On October 1, 1997, the Executive Officer, accompanied by other Regional Board staff, met with Mr. Reddy Pakala, Ventura County Waterworks District No. 1, and Chuck Rogers, Ventura Regional Sanitation District, to discuss the importance of the Nyeland Acres Wastewater Treatment Plant's Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) No. CI-6542 and the role it plays in the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management process. As stated in the Discharger's MRP, its purpose is to determine:

compliance with effluent and receiving water limits, trends in surface water quality, impacts to beneficial uses, data needs for modeling contaminants of concern, and potential impacts to ground water.

The discharger had not been monitoring all of the parameters listed in their MRP since June 1996, because according to the Discharger, it was going to cost too much money and would result in increased sewer rates for the sewer users. Since the Discharger intended to abandon the treatment plant within a year of the permit issuance and construct a pipeline connection to the Oxnard Treatment plant, it did not want to spend more money on monitoring. After a successful meeting, we were able to reach an agreement with the Discharger. The Discharger agreed to do additional monitoring and the EO agreed to modify the Discharger's MRP under his authority. Copies of the revised MRP were out on October 10, 1997. The Discharger will be providing valuable water quality data on the receiving water, which will help us to assess the effect of nonpoint sources in that reach of the Calleguas Creek Watershed

Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program (BPTCP)

The California Water Code established the BPTCP in 1989. The BPTCP has the following goals: identify and characterize toxic hot spots within enclosed bays and estuaries, plan for prevention and control of further pollution at toxic hot spots, and develop plans for remedial actions at existing toxic hot spots and prevent creation of new toxic hot spots. The BPTCP was scheduled to end following fiscal year 1997-98 due to termination of authorization to collect fees to support the program.

Assembly Bill 1479, which would have provided funding for the BPTCP for an additional four years, was vetoed recently by Governor Wilson. However, the governor indicated that he was committed to finding funding to continue this valuable program. State Board is developing a Budget Change Proposal to continue the BPTCP into Fiscal Year 1998-99, with a focus on developing cleanup plans and completing the other mandates of the BPTCP. State Board and Regional Board staff plan to meet in October to develop a strategy for modifying the workplans and a schedule for completion of the required tasks.

Watershed Protection and Restoration Council (WPRC)

The WPRC was created recently by Executive Order W-159-97. The WPRC will be responsible for providing oversight of State activities aimed at watershed protection and enhancement, including the conservation and restoration of anadromous salmonids in California.

The Council has established a working group to produce a draft report defining the existing and future measures needed to protect and restore watersheds to support anadromous fish species (i.e., coho salmon and steelhead trout). The report will describe the environmental conditions required by anadromous fish, protection measures needed to prevent further declines of these species, restoration measures required to ensure their future survival, and an adaptive management process to integrate the State's programs and monitor success. The Council has appointed a Science Panel and Advisory Groups to review the working group's products and provide guidance.

A draft report will be submitted to the Council at its October 30, 1997, meeting. During November, the working group will work with the Council, the Science Panel and the Advisory Groups to produce a final report by November 30, 1997. This final report will form the basis for a state management plan to be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval. Ultimately, the plan would be implemented at the local level with the cooperation of the stakeholders within a given watershed.

Preparations for Potential Heavy Winter Rains

Weather forecasters have predicted the possibility of much heavier-than-normal rainfall during the

upcoming winter storm season because of the existing El Niño condition. In preparation for possible severe flooding and to prevent or minimize loss of or damage to life, health and property, the Los Angeles Regional Board has been working closely with applicants and the other regulatory and resource agencies to expedite approval of permits for projects required to alleviate flood danger. During September and October, staff completed processing of applications for 401 Water Quality Certification from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Ventura County Public Works Agency, City of Los Angeles and City of Camarillo, allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to issue permits for these critical flood control projects.

Regional Board staff worked very closely with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to process and approve its request for channel clearing (i.e., vegetation and debris removal) maintenance activities required in earthen flood control channels covering approximately 900 acres throughout Los Angeles County. Regional Board staff met with LA County staff on September 25, 1997, to outline a strategy to streamline review of the permit application for this extensive project. We met again on September 30th to review the contents of the application and verify its completeness. In October, weekly coordination meetings were attended by management staff representing LA County, the Regional Board and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to resolve policy issues and ensure that review of the permit application was proceeding on schedule. Regional Board staff maintained daily contact with the technical staff at the State Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies to evaluate the proposed channel clearing project. On October 17, 1997, the Regional Board's Executive Officer submitted a recommendation to State Board for approval of the project with appropriate conditions. State Board certification of the project is expected within one week, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expected to issue the final permit to LA County by October 27, 1997, at the latest. Thanks to the rapid resolution of many complex issues within a very short timeframe, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will be able to proceed in a timely fashion with the channel clearing activities needed to increase the capacity to handle heavy storm flows.

Quarterly Report - Refinery & Tank Farm Investigations and Cleanup

On October 15, 1997, at the former Golden West Refinery in Santa Fe Springs, the Golden Springs Development Company broke ground for a planned 265-acre industrial park; reportedly the largest project of its kind in Los Angeles County. Staff provided remediation oversight during the last several years, culminating in a Prospective Purchaser Agreement (PPA) for the southern portion of the West Tank Farm which the Board ratified in May 1997. Additional PPAs will be requested in the future to address the remaining West Tank Farm and the refinery.

On October 15, 1997, a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) was issued to Paramount Refinery to require the re-evaluation of the existing free product recovery system and require submittal of a remedial action plan. This brings to two, the number of large refineries in this Region still needing conversion of the original Board Order 85-17 into full site specific CAOs.

Powerine Oil Company in Santa Fe Springs, to whom the Board ratified a PPA in August 1997, for development of the Lakeland Property, has sold the property and is negotiating with potential investors for start-up of the refinery. Also, this sale now allows Powerine to initiate remediation of existing off-site ground water contamination which was a condition of the PPA.

Department of Defense (DOD) Program

The final 1997-98 FY DoD Program Workplan was submitted to Mr. Walt Petit by Mr. Harry M. Schueller in September, 1997. Region 4 received 2.5 PYs and was designated lead agency at 8 of the 15 DoD Facilities in this region.

On October 2, 1997, and October 8, 1997, Keith Elliott made presentations regarding our Containment Zone Policy to staff of the Business Revitalization Center (BRC) in West Los Angeles and Allied Signal in Torrance.

On October 22, 1997, the Los Angeles Regional Board hosted the second meeting of the "City of Los Angeles Brownfields Redevelopment Committee". As reported previously, the mission is to get regulatory involvement in the City Brownfields development.